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CONFIDENTIAL

BACKGROUND NOTES ON EAST TIMOR

Pat Walsh, May 1987

N.B. These notes are for the benefit of friends directly involved with East Timor. Though they contain no startling revelations, to protect sources you are kindly requested not to directly attribute the information to me by name, or to publish the contents.

I visited Jakarta 4-8 May en route back to Australia from the third INGI Conference held in Zeist, Holland 27-29 April. The computer is operating at Sukarno-Hatta airport but there were no hitches or questions asked. This surprised Indonesian friends as my name had been mentioned in at least two of the Indonesian media a couple of weeks earlier in reports on a Peter Hastings Sydney Morning Herald article attacking Australian NGOs as anti-Indonesian and "bleeding hearts" over East Timor.

Over these few days, I discussed East Timor with a range of people including foreign correspondents, the ICRC, East Timorese and Catholic Church officials.

The following subjects were addressed:

1. The situation of the four East Timorese students.
2. East Timorese prisoners in Jakarta.
3. The Church in East Timor.
4. The general situation.

1. The four students

For security reasons it was not possible to meet the students as a group or to visit their place of residence in Kebayoran Baru. Their residence is next door to that of the local RT (neighbourhood) official who keeps tabs on them by having his children visit etc. The Yomiuri Shimbun correspondent said his visits were observed by a member of the military positioned in the street near the students house.. There was general agreement amongst those concerned with the case, e.g. ICRC, foreign correspondents, and by the students themselves that their movements were monitored. This surveillance, however, is not such as to stop them from moving around as in the case of the visits to me or to the ICRC office, Dutch embassy, etc. Nor is it so worrying or tight that they have had to terminate contacts with other East Timorese in Jakarta or with the situation in East Timor or to completely abandon their support work.

I met Antonino Goncalves on two occasions and dealt with him as the representative of the others. I handed over money for their support, literature on East Timor, (including Jose Ramos Horta's Funu, the Statement by Concerned Christians - CIIR version, the Borja da Costa Tebe collection and other bits and pieces requesting they be passed on to the bush) and briefed him on the international situation.

Rental for their current accommodation is paid till August when they have to find other accommodation as the house is to be sold. They are seriously short

of money for living costs and for extras such as reading material and travel. They try to visit the ICRC in Kebayoran Baru and the Dutch embassy once a week. They have asked the Dutch for financial assistance to be told they will think about it. Dutch embassy staff will only meet them in the street. To the students' enquiries on the progress of their case, the answer is always the same, no news, no news. Apart from the money from CIIR there has been virtually no other assistance. Indonesian intelligence have asked other Timorese students where the four are obtaining support to be told 'we don't know'. Their government scholarships have been withdrawn, of course. They have no contact with the Catholic Church in Jakarta and consequently receive no support from that quarter. Support from abroad is therefore necessary and can be channelled via Australia. One concerned observer in Jakarta warned against dependency and suggested the students should find work as a source of income, particularly if their wait for exit permits is to be prolonged. The students want to use their time better, particularly to study. They appeal for 4th Year University level text books in Portuguese and in English on law, economics, and civil engineering. The transfer of this material can also be coordinated in Australia. Financial assistance is also required for their support work.

I met with ICRC officialsJean Francois Berger (Delegate) and Sophie Rossillion (Tracing Delegate) on 6 May. They share the view of other observers in Jakarta that the students' future is in the hands of the military (Murdani) who will not permit them to leave Indonesia as Portuguese citizens. The ICRC role is limited to staying in touch with the students and providing moral support.

On 6 May I also met with Lenny Setiawati of the UNHCR at her office in Menteng. As the UNHCR brief in Indonesia is restricted exclusively to Indo Chinese refugee matters she regrettably had to rule out any UNHCR involvement at the Jakarta end.

I sought a meeting with the new Papal Pro-Nuncio (Vatican Ambassador), Mgr. Canalini to explore the possibility of a Church initiative but he refused to see me. (See item 3 on the Church in East Timor).

On 8 May I discussed the case at length with Dr. Gerard Bonang, Rector of Atma Jaya Catholic University. Though completely "Indonesian" in his attitude to East Timor (eg. he said his aim had been to give the Timorese students the best education possible to equip them fully for their responsibilities in the new, backward province of Tim-Tim), he struck me as a person of genuine concern. He recapitulated his version of the case making the following points:

- he protested the authorities' intrusion on the Atma Jaya campus to arrest Antonino to be told he had been detained for illegal possession of firearms.
- after their release he asked the students if they had been maltreated and was told no, and on other occasions they assured him everything was OK;
- he was completely taken by surprise when the Dutch Embassy phoned to inform him three Atma Jaya students and one other had sought political asylum.
- he went to the Embassy to dissuade the students from this course of action but defended their right as Indonesians to emigrate.
- he drove them to Guilhermo Goncalves' residence and provided money for their care.
- he instructed his assistant to offer to re-enrol the students, (including the Pancasila University student whose university has taken no interest in the case) at Atma/Jaya in the Jan/Feb 1987 intake;

the students did not take up the offer.

- the offer remains; he would also approach the Government for a resumption of their scholarships.

- the case will not be quickly resolved; rather than waste time on a fruitless challenge to the government they should return to the university, complete their studies (three are final year students), gain a qualification, find work then quietly leave Indonesia. If they were afraid to return to East Timor after graduation he would help them find employment in Jakarta; this would be a more productive use of time, and more likely to succeed.

- he did not think there was anything to be gained by involving a foreign (Japanese) University in the case.

I reported fully to Antonino as group representative on my efforts and conversations, making the following points:

a) Indonesia would not allow them to leave on Portuguese passports;

b) international concern over their case should not be over-estimated, though efforts to publicise their situation would be continued.

c) the possibility of leaving on Indonesian passports had not been ruled out.

d) if their priority both as individuals and as Timorese nationalists was to depart, (c) was the only option short of buying their way out (which would arguably cost a fortune given their notoriety).

e) travelling on Indonesian documents was a practical consideration which presumably did not raise issues of principle as up until a few months ago they had lived and been supported effectively as Indonesians.

f) Bonang's offer may be the only practical way forward.

As I understood it, Antonino's response amounted to this: they had made up their minds that they should be publicly what they really are, namely East Timorese, not Indonesians. They see no future for themselves as Indonesians. The international community has to be reminded that the East Timorese do not accept integration. Their personal interests are secondary to the demands of the struggle. What they do while they remain in Jakarta and the terms of their departure will be determined by these considerations. They need support for their work and publicity for their case.

They entrusted me with a letter of appeal to the European Parliament, and will prepare letters to international student and other bodies.

2. TIMORESE PRISONERS IN JAKARTA

Clearly it was not possible for me to visit either Cipinang where there are 42 Timorese male prisoners or Tangerang Women's prison where Dominggas da Costa is the sole Timorese. However, I was able to learn the following:

Cipinang is an old Dutch prison on the outskirts on Jakarta used principally for criminals of whom there are some 2000 imprisoned for everything from pick-pocketing to drug pushing to murder. Many are quite young. There are also three groups of "political prisoners", officially segregated from the criminal majority. These are (1) the 1965 group (about 22 in number, mostly old, some of whom have been executed over the last two years); (2) the Timorese group (42); and (3) the Muslim group (about 40). These three groups are in turn officially kept apart from each other. Unofficially there is some contact between the tapol groups and between the tapols and the other prisoners. Mochtar Lubis believes the political prisoners should all be accommodated together in Nirbaya prison where conditions are better. Given the informal interaction occurring in Cipinang some informed observers suggest this segregation would be too isolating.

In Cipinang there are two tapols to each 2 x 3 m. cell. The cells have thick walls and one barred window so high the sun and moon are not visible. There are two beds, one above the other, made of concrete and attached to the walls, like shelves. Since 1976 when the ICRC visits started mattresses have been added. The only other 'furniture' is a toilet can which is emptied each morning. There is no water and the cell is so dimly lit it is difficult to read. Prisoners are locked in their cells from 7pm - 6am daily. Three meals a day are provided but are inadequate in quantity and quality. Breakfast is followed by compulsory physical exercise then rostered duties of cleaning, dishwashing, etc. There follows a compulsory session in the prison workshops where handicrafts etc. are produced for sale by the prison for which the prisoners are paid an insignificant sum. During the late afternoon there is a sort of free time in the respective cell blocks during which religious and cultural activities, reading (religious material), and handicrafts (using leftovers from the prison workshop) are permitted. Only religious reading material is permitted. Newspapers and general literature are proscribed. Letters are censored and destroyed if the contents are unacceptable to the authorities. The Red Cross has donated TV; viewing is permitted twice a week in the evening. Visits are restricted to family and approved religious groups.

Handicrafts made by the prisoners in their own time may be sold by relatives to raise money to pay for badly needed extra food, clothes and medicines. Needless to say, the Timorese, whose families are in Timor and cannot visit them, are very restricted in their capacity to earn in this way. I was able, however, to bring back two beautifully crafted wooden fans for sale in Australia and hope to collect more in the future.

The two most basic needs are food and medicine and small items like soap. Some medicines are supplied by the prison but sophisticated, expensive prescriptions for T.B. etc have to be obtained privately. Funds collected by the Australian East Timor Association were handed over for these and related purposes.

There are only two tapols in Tangerang - Dominggas da Costa and a '1965' tapol. They are not segregated from the rest of the prison population. Dominggas has a brother in Cipinang but mutual visits are not permitted. She is well and receives the occasional visitor.

In January the ICRC organised and paid for Timorese relatives to visit from East Timor. Two relatives per prisoner were permitted to make three visits over three days. Several were wives. Photos were taken of which I have a set. Dominggas was driven across Jakarta to Cipinang (where she has a brother) for the

occasion but the distance was considered too great and she was not permitted to make the trip on the remaining days.

In 1986 David Ximenes, the elected spokesperson for the Timorese group in Cipinang, wrote letters to several overseas points including the Pope and the Australian Church. Whether these ever reached their destination and if so what the response was is not known. I have copies which will be translated and sent off with a request for a reply.

It should be noted that the first of the Timorese prisoners are due for release this June.

3. THE CHURCH IN EAST TIMOR

I phoned the Papal Ambassador (Apostolic Pro-Nuncio), Mgr. Francesco Canalini, to make an appointment. After explaining that I worked for ACFOA and wanted to talk about East Timor, he replied, "There are no new elements to this question, therefore there is nothing to talk about. It is impossible to grant you an interview". This was a diplomatic lie. The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Casaroli, had been in Lisbon a few days earlier and because of the disputed status of East Timor the Vatican is closely involved with the situation. Mgr. Belo, I was told, takes his orders both officially and unofficially from the Vatican. Canalini's policy is that the Church must accept the new situation. There is absolutely no support for political independence or autonomy. He is, I was told, a member of Opus Dei. Unlike his predecessor, Mgr. Pablo Puente, who would visit MAWI (Indonesian Bishops Conference) secretariat to swap notes on East Timor, Canalini has no such relationship. His relations with General Murdani are unknown.

Tensions between Portuguese Jesuit Fathers Felgueiras and Martins and the authorities, both Church and military, are not a recent development. Felgueiras will not be permitted to return. Fr. Djikstra asked the military on his behalf for a visit; this was denied. Three Indonesian Jesuits have been posted to East Timor, one of whom will replace Felgueiras as Seminary Rector. These appointments signal a hardening of Church policy away from the earlier compromise policy of internationalising the clergy in Timor by introducing neutral (i.e. neither Timorese nor Indonesian) Portuguese speaking clergy from, say, Brazil. The military oppose foreign clergy in case they spread liberation theology. Fr. Martins remains in East Timor and will probably stay for at least the foreseeable future. He is strongly supported by sections of the clergy. Mgr. Belo was involved in the move against Felgueiras and Martins.

The number of Indonesian Church personnel, especially Catholic teaching sisters, in East Timor has increased. Relations with the local people, however, are still difficult. It would appear the relation between the Timorese and Indonesian Church is moving toward de facto integration, though this has not been formalised. For example, Mgr. Belo accompanied MAWI Bishops on a funding mission to Europe late last year, but was careful to correct the delegation leader who introduced the group as MAWI pointing out that the delegation comprised MAWI and the Apostolic Administrator of East Timor.

Evidence of a growing co-operative relationship with the Indonesian Church, (and Government), is as follows:

- the move against Felgueiras involved Fr. Darminto, the Indonesian Jesuit

Provincial;

- Felgueiras' replacement will be Indonesian;
- the appointment of Indonesian Church personnel in East Timor;
- Mgr. Belo's decision to participate in the establishment of a new regional seminary in Malang, East Java, at which Timorese students for the priesthood will train;
- Mgr. Belo's direct appeal to President Suharto for funds towards the construction of this seminary, an appeal headed off by MAWI;
- the receipt of substantial funds from the Government/military for the renovation and construction of new Churches in East Timor. Fr. Jose Antonio, the Diocesan Procurator, is particularly active in this regard.

Nevertheless relations with LPPS, the MAWI Aid Agency, appear to be severely strained. The last visits to East Timor by LPPS officials took place in August and September 1986. Mgr. Belo has reportedly criticised LPPS to Western agencies and asked that funds for Timor be sent direct to Dili. LPPS for its part feels that in view of the level of Government funding available emergency aid to the Dili diocese should cease. There have also been differences regarding project selection with, e.g.an LPPS proposal for housing for ex-detainees on Church land being rejected by Mgr. Belo in favour of office development as a long term source of income. Mgr. Belo is regarded as weak, inexperienced and without a clear stand. Fr. Ricardo, the Vicar General, would have made a better Bishop. He is close to the people, and respected and clear. No strong statements are likely from Mgr. Belo in the foreseeable future.

The desecration of a number of religious statues in February this year, though difficult to interpret, is possibly something of a qualification on the above. A statue of Our Lady, positioned on a hill in Comoro and inaugurated by Sudharmono (the Golkar chief) in 1986, had its arm broken. Another statue of Our Lady in Lahane, was badly damaged. A third statue, in Subao, was doused with petrol and set alight, whilst a fourth, in Ainaro, was robbed of its crown. The Indonesian authorities blamed Fretilin. The people were deeply angered by the incidents and blamed Indonesia accusing the military of attacking the Church in retaliation for support for Fretilin. Mgr. Belo publicly condemned the vandalism saying that if foreigners could not respect Timorese traditions they should leave.

4. THE GENERAL SITUATION

According to the ICRC 800 people from Atauro have been re-located to the main island to their communities of origin. 200 remain, but of their own choice. They are growing their own food and are accommodated in the original barracks built for the detainees. Some have inter-married with local people. The ICRC nurse has been withdrawn and now works in Dili. To ICRC the detention centre on Atauro has effectively been shut down.

Many humanitarian problems continue in the eastern districts particularly, including malnutrition, due chiefly to ongoing military conflict. In response to Fretilin attacks the Indonesian military seize villages, make arrests, restrict movements for a period of weeks and food shortages result. Access by agencies to these areas is restricted, including the ICRC, UNICEF, the local Church. A new NGO, Christian Childrens' Fund (CCF) has sought permission to work in East Timor and is expected to be given the go ahead.

CSIS (The Centre for Strategic and International Studies) in Jakarta continue to publish on East Timor, especially Kristiadi, a staff member of the Department of Political Affairs in CSIS. The Indonesian Quarterly (put out by CSIS) Vol. X14 no. 4, 1986, carried a 31 page article by him, The Decolonisation of East Timor. A Historical Review. An Indonesian language version of this article also appeared in the CSIS special on East Timor Satu Dasawarsa Timor Timur. (Analisa 1986 - Nov). This 116 page publication also contains articles on the international dimensions of the Timor problem, the Timor Gap, and development. (If I may intrude with a comment it's pretty infuriating stuff!) Also circulating is a 54 page outline of an economic survey of East Timor entitled East Timor: Economic Viability, Absorption and Distribution by Hadi Soesastro (January 1987). I wasalso able to collect a copy of Frans Seda's Nov 1985 briefing on East Timor to the Vatican Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace. Seda, a former Government Minister, is the Indonesian representative on this Commission and a member of the Atma Jaya University Board.

Fighting continues but Fretilin appear to be more isolated. CSIS statistics on the Indonesian Armed Forces put Fretilin strength at 1500 (compared to 100 in West Papua) and Indonesian strength at 15,000. Indonesian tactics in Timor are to contain and wait in the belief that time is on Indonesia's side and that the diplomatic and military balance favours Indonesia. Murdani and Suharto remain 100% committed to to al integration. Opinions over Murdani's future vary with some arguing he is secure while Suharto remains and others claiming he will be replaced when Suharto chooses a new Cabinet next year. Mario Carrascalao's future is also hitched to Murdani's. He is sure to keep his job while Murdani is in power; they get on well, with Carrascalao invariably getting Murdani's support when asked for. Carrascalao is seen as a person of integrity who believes in what he is doing, is prepared to deal strongly with corruption (an attitude which has created hostility in sections of the Dili bureaucracy), and has the confidence of the people. In his election speeches in East Timor Mochtar appealed directly to Carrascalao's record. Carrascalao is good for Timor and it is important that he stays.

Andrée Feillard, the Asiaweek correspondent in Jakarta, last visited East Timor in 1985 when she wrote a cover story on the issue. She was invited to travel with Mochtar on his recent election visit, but refused on the grounds that it would be a frustrating waste of time and she couldn't take a re-run of her 1985 experience. On that occasion she couldn't wait to get out after 6 days. She found East Timor a very sad place, where she was 'minded' the whole time and the atmosphere was extremely distrustful. She reported substantial questioning of the struggle in sections of Timorese society where it was argued, "we've lost, and there's no real international support. Let's be reasonable and find an alternative. Fretilin in the bush don't understand how hard it is while the fighting continues". She was also struck by the self-questioning amongst Indonesian professionals working as teachers, doctors, etc. on low wages but who the people will not come to.

Peter Hiett, the BBC Correspondent accompanied Mochtar to Timor on his election visit. He was struck by the material progress and availability of good food in Dili, but felt he saw only the official Timor. In his speeches Mochtar stressed development under Indonesia in contrast to Portugal and Carrascalao's record as Governor.

Note: the views expressed in these notes are not necessarily the author's! The purpose of the notes is to make available the principal pieces of information and comment I was able to collect from, it should be stressed, concerned observers and people involved with the issue.